

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

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FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1058

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

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C O N F I D E N T I A L KHARTOUM 0329

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MILI, PFOR, XA, SU

SUBJ: REGIONAL ARMS RESTRAINTS STUDY

REF: STATE 20621

1. BUDGETING CONSTRAINTS CONSTITUTE AN AUTOMATIC IMPEDIMENT TO A SUBSTANTIAL ARMS IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM, EITHER QUANTITATIVE OR QUALITATIVE, IN THE SUDAN. BUT EVEN IF GOS WERE TO REALIZE ITS DREAM OF MASSIVE CASH INFLOWS FROM THE GULF, DEVELOPMENT NEEDS WOULD HAVE A PRIORITY CALL ON ALL RESOURCES FOR YEARS TO COME. WHILE SUDANESE WOULD WANT TO STEP UP THEIR PURCHASE OF BADLY NEEDED SPARES OR REPLACEMENTS FOR LARGELY SOVIET-ORIGIN INVENTORY, THERE IS LITTLE PERCEIVED NEED FOR SIGNIFICANT INCREASE IN SOPHISTICATION OR FIREPOWER. THOUGH OCCASIONALLY SEEING ITSELF AS A "CONFRONTATION STATE" IN ARAB-ISRAELI CONTEXT, SUDANESE DEFENSIVE NEEDS RELATE IN REAL TERMS ONLY TO PERIODIC CROSSFIRE ALONG ETHIOPIAN AND, ON LESS FREQUENT BASIS, UGANDIAN BORDERS.

2. GOS MIGHT WELL BE INTERESTED IN THE LONG RUN IN SOME REGIONAL SCHEME FOR LIMITING IMPORTATION OF CONVENTIONAL ARMS IF IT WERE TO INCLUDE BOTH OF THE COUNTRIES MENTIONED ABOVE
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AND, PROBABLY, SOMALIA, FOR IT WOULD BOTH FREE UP SCARCE

RESOURCES AND REDUCE CURRENT DEPENDENCE ON USSR. FOR THE PRESENT, HOWEVER, THE REGIME'S CLEARLY FELT NEED TO KEEP THE ARMY HAPPY WOULD PRECLUDE PARTIIPATION IN SUCH A SCHEME.

3. WESTERN ALLIES ARE NOT IN A POSITION TO EXERCISE DIRECT CONSTRAINTS HERE, SINCE NONE IS AN ARMS SUPPLIER SO FAR AS WE ARE AWARE. EVEN WERE USG TO RELAX ITS POLICY HOLDS ON ASSISTANCE TO THE SUDAN, ITS ONLY REAL POTENTIAL FOR LEVERAGE WOULD LIE IN IMPOSITION OF EXPORT CONTROLS JOINTLY WITH THE USSR AND ON A REGIONAL BASIS, I.E. TO INCLUDE ETHIOPIA AND SOMALIA AND, NOTWITHSTANDING THE DISPARATE GEOPOLITICAL SITUATIONS, THE FRONT LINE STATES IN THE MIDDLE EAST. ADDITIONAL PROBLEM WOULD BE FACT THAT RUSSIANS UNLIKELY CONSIDER THIS APPROACH IN ABSENCE GUARANTEES OF PARALLEL ACTION BY CHINESE, WHO ALSO HAVE CONTRIBUTED SUBSTANTIALLY IN PAST TO SUDANESE AIRCRAFT, ARMOR AND ARTILLERY STOCKS. BREWER

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